

109TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4809

To amend the provisions of chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, commonly referred to as the Paperwork Reduction Act, to ensure usability and clarity of information disseminated by Federal agencies, and to facilitate compliance with Federal paperwork requirements.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 28, 2006

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan (for herself and Mr. LYNCH) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Government Reform

A BILL

To amend the provisions of chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, commonly referred to as the Paperwork Reduction Act, to ensure usability and clarity of information disseminated by Federal agencies, and to facilitate compliance with Federal paperwork requirements.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Regulation in Plain
5 Language Act of 2006”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

1 (1) AGENCY.—The term “agency” means an
2 Executive agency, as that term is defined in section
3 105 of title 5, United States Code.

4 (2) REGULATION.—The term “regulation”
5 means a rule, as that term is defined in section
6 551(4) of title 5, United States Code, that is issued
7 by an agency.

8 **SEC. 3. PROCEDURES FOR ENSURING USABILITY AND**
9 **CLARITY IN RULEMAKING.**

10 (a) DEFINITION OF PLAIN LANGUAGE.—Section
11 3502 of title 44, United States Code, is amended—

12 (1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph
13 (13);

14 (2) by striking the period and inserting “; and”
15 at the end of paragraph (14); and

16 (3) by adding at the end the following new
17 paragraph:

18 “(15) the term ‘plain language’ means language
19 that is clear and readily understandable to the in-
20 tended reader and complies with the following stand-
21 ards:

22 “(A) Uses short words, sentences, and
23 paragraphs.

24 “(B) Uses active verbs.

1 “(C) Contains explanations of legal, for-
2 eign, and technical terms, unless the terms are
3 commonly understood.

4 “(D) Avoids defining terms that are com-
5 monly understood.

6 “(E) Uses personal pronouns to refer to
7 affected persons and the responsible agency if
8 helpful to improve clarity.

9 “(F) Minimizes cross-references.

10 “(G) Avoids sentences with double nega-
11 tives or exceptions to exceptions.

12 “(H) Uses tables, diagrams, pictures,
13 maps, and vertical lists to improve clarity.

14 “(I) Demonstrates logical organization.

15 “(J) Addresses separate audiences sepa-
16 rately.

17 “(K) Places general material before excep-
18 tions and specialized information.

19 “(L) Addresses processes covered by a rule
20 in chronological order.

21 “(M) Follows other best practices of plain
22 language writing.”.

23 (b) RESPONSIBILITY OF FEDERAL AGENCIES TO
24 PROMOTE PLAIN LANGUAGE.—Section 3506(d) of title
25 44, United States Code, is amended—

1 (1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph
2 (3);

3 (2) by striking the period at the end of para-
4 graph (4) and inserting “; and”; and

5 (3) by adding at the end the following new
6 paragraph:

7 “(5) ensure that regulations are written in
8 plain, understandable language consistent with the
9 definition of ‘plain language’ in section 3502(15) of
10 this title, through—

11 “(A) designating an agency official as
12 plain language coordinator;

13 “(B) establishing a process for reviewing
14 each regulation to ensure its compliance with
15 this paragraph before publishing it in the Fed-
16 eral Register;

17 “(C) publishing guidelines to implement
18 this paragraph—

19 “(i) not later than 120 days after the
20 date of the enactment of this paragraph;

21 “(ii) after consulting with other Fed-
22 eral agencies and the Interagency Com-
23 mittee on Government Information to pro-
24 mote consistency of application between
25 agencies; and

1 “(iii) after consulting with affected
2 stakeholders;

3 “(D) training employees who write regula-
4 tions to write in plain language;

5 “(E) reporting to the Committee on Gov-
6 ernment Reform of the House of Representa-
7 tives and the Committee on Homeland Security
8 and Governmental Affairs of the Senate annu-
9 ally for the first 2 years after the date of the
10 enactment of this paragraph and once every 3
11 years thereafter on compliance with this para-
12 graph, including—

13 “(i) agency implementation of its
14 guidelines;

15 “(ii) agency actions to ensure consist-
16 ency with other Federal agency guidelines;
17 and

18 “(iii) examples of some of the changes
19 made to draft regulations in the previous
20 year to conform with this paragraph.”.

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